

A Boater's Bible: 10 Tips for Preserving the Coast

With thousands of people enjoying boating every year, recreational boaters can inadvertently contribute to the marine pollution problem, especially in back bays and rivers. You can reduce your boat's amount of pollution by following these tips:

- 1** Avoid using toxic TBT paints. Use the safer alternative antifouling paints available at your local marina or boating store.
- 2** Keep a garbage receptacle on board, keep it covered, and make sure everyone on board uses it. If you dispose of your garbage at a marina, follow their recycling rules. If your marina does not recycle, encourage them to start a recycling program.
- 3** *Never* discard fishing line overboard.
- 4** Avoid bringing disposable plastic products on board, especially plastic bags and six-pack rings. Not only are these products harmful to marine animals, but they also tangle boat props, clog intakes, and litter beaches.
- 5** *Never* throw cigarette butts overboard. Studies show that filters, which don't break down in the marine environment, are harmful to sea birds and the entire food chain.
- 6** Don't discharge human waste directly into the water. If you have an installed toilet, be sure to use the nearest sewage pump-out facility rather than discharging waste at sea. If you own a portable toilet, empty it in a restroom. If your boat doesn't have a toilet, buy one at a local marine retailer!
- 7** When filling your boat's gas tank, avoid spilling or overflowing gasoline into the water.
- 8** Make sure your motor doesn't leak gas or oil into the water. Don't drain engine fluids into the water.
- 9** Place a bilge "pillow" — an oil absorbing sponge available at marine stores — in your bilge to remove oil from your bilge water before discharge.
- 10** When cleaning your boat, use a *non-phosphate* detergent and a scrub brush.

Pass along these suggestions to other boaters!